

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2883

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USINT BAGHDAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 0400

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, LE

SUBJECT: THE SECRET PARTITIONIST - LEBANON'S CHRISTIANS HOLD A

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1. BY SEPARATE AIRGRAM, ADDRESSEES WILL RECEIVE A COMPREHENSIVE ACCOUNT

AND ANALYSIS OF THE CONCLAVE HELD BY SOME 30 LEADERS OF THE "KFUR
FRONT" JAN 21-23 AT SAYDET EL-BIR. FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY ACCOUNT OF
EVENTS DURING AND AFTER THE CONCLAVE.

2. THE EVENT. THE CONCLAVE WAS HELD BEHIND CLOSED DOORS. THE "BIG FOUR"

OF THE KFUR FRONT -- FORMER PRES SULEIMAN FRANGIE, PIERRE GEMAYEL, CAMILLE CHAMOUN AND PERE CHARBEL KASSIS -- TOOK TURNS PRESIDING. THE GROUP LED BY FRANGIE WAS THE MOST NUMEROUS. BECHIR GEMAYEL AND DANY CHAMOUN WERE LISTED AS A SEPARATE GROUP REPRESENTING THE RIGHTIST "UNIFIED MILITARY COMMAND." THE "TANZIM" AND THE RADICAL "CHRISITAN REJECTIONISTS" OF THE GUARDIANS OF THE CEDAR DID NOT PARTICIPATE.

3. THE PARTIES AND THEIR POSITIONS. NONE OF THE WORKING PAPERS SUBMITTED BY THE VARIOUS GROUPS CONSTITUTED A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO LEBANON'S PROBLEMS. NEITHER DID ANY SERIOUS DISAGREEMENTS EMERGE. SOMEWHAT SURPRISINGLY, THE MONKS OF KASLIK APPEAR TO HAVE TAKEN THE HARDEST STAND ON THE KEY ISSUES REVOLVING AROUND THE CHRISITANS' WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE WITH LEBANON'S MUSLIMS TO FIND A VIABLE NEW NATIONAL FORMULA.

4. THE ISSUES. THERE WAS GEN AGREEMENT ON THE NEED FOR A FORMULA FOR LEBANON TO REPLACE THE 1943 NATL PACT, WHICH, ALL THE PARTIES AGREED, WAS AT THE ROOT OF THE CIVIL WAR. THE CONFEREES GAVE LIP SERVICE TO LEBANESE NATL UNITY, BUT GENERALLY IN THE CONTEXT OF CASTIGATING THE MUSLIMS FOR BEING POOR PATRIOTS.

5. THE CONFEREES STATED THEIR OPPOSITION TO PARTITION, BUT THEN FOCUSED EXTENSIVELY ON THE CONCEPT OF "PLURALITY." THE NATL LIBERALS ENDORSED "PLURALITY UNDER A FED SYSTEM." THE KASLIK GROUP CALLED FOR "POLITICAL DECENTRALIZATION" IN THE FORM OF A LOOSE "CONFEDERATION." THE PHALANGE CALLED FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FOUR "GOVERNORATES" -- "MIDDLE LEB, NORTH LEB, SOUTH LEB AND BEIRUT -- THE FEDERAL CAPITAL,"

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AND INCLUDED BOTH DEFENSE AND FINANCE AS AREAS OF COMPETENCE FOR EACH "GOVERNORATE."

6. WHILE SUPPORTING THE GEN PRINCIPLE OF DECONFESSIONALIZATION, THE FRANGIE GROUP DEFENDED THE FEB 1976 "CONSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENT" AND THE PHALANGE CALLED FOR CONTINUATION OF THE MARONITE PRESIDENCY.

7. ALL THE GROUPS CASTIGATED LEBANON'S MUSLIMS FOR THEIR ROLE IN THE WAR, THEIR SYMPATHY WITH INTER-ARAB CAUSES AND THEIR ALLIANCE WITH THE

PALESTINIANS. THE PALESTINIANS WERE ACCUSED OF SEEKING TO DESTROY LEB.

LIP SERVICE WAS GIVEN TO THE NECESSITY OF COOPERATION WITH NEIGHBORING

ARAB COUNTRIES, BUT MORE EMPHASIS WAS PLACED ON BLAMING THE ARAB WORLD

FOR WHAT HAD BEFALLEN LEB. FOREIGN, MEANING MOSTLY ARAB, MEDDLING IN LEBANON WAS EXCORIATED.

8. THE CONFEREES WANT MORE HELP FROM OVERSEAS LEBANESE, AND THE NATL LIBERALS PROPOSED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LEB INSTITUTION RESEMBLING THE JEWISH AGENCY.

9. THE COMMUNIQUE. FOR THE PUBLIC RECORD, HOWEVER, THE FINAL COOMMUNI-

QUE OF THE CONCLAVE GAVE NO HINT OF WHAT WAS REALLY DISCUSSED. OTHER THAN PATRIOTIC SLOGANS, IT DEALT ESSENTIALLY WITH ORGANIZATIONAL QUESTIONS.

10. ORGANIZATIONAL MOVES. THE FRONT HAS APPARENTLY DECIDED ON A NUMBER

OF STEPS: IT IS SETTING UP A GEN SECRETARIAT, TO PLAN A "NATIONAL CON-

GRESS," BUT IT IS UNCLEAR WHO MIGHT BE INVITED. VARIOUS COMMITTEES ARE

BEING ESTABLISHED, SOME OF WHICH MAY WORK ON DRAFT LEGISLATION.
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11. "PLURALITY." THE FRONT'S LEADERS ARE NOW BRANDISHING THE SLOGAN OF

"PLURALITY," AS A WAY TO PRESERVE LEBANON'S "UNITY IN DIVERSITY." SINCE

THE CONCLAVE, CHRISTIAN LEADERS HAVE NOT DISCUSSED "DECENTRALIZATION" PUBLICLY, OR, IF THEY HAVE, THE GOVT'S CENSORS HAVE SUPRESSED IT. DORY CHAMOUN EVEN DENIED, FOR THE RECORD, THAT DECENTRALIZATION WAS DISCUSSED AT THE CONCLAVE. WHILE THE CONCLAVE WAS GOING ON, PRIMIN AL-HOSS STATED THAT THE GOVT IS LOOKING TOWARDS "ADMIN DECENTRALIZATION" AS "A KIND OF PARTITION."

12. COMMENT: WHATEVER THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS ARE SAYING FOR THE PUBLIC RECORD, ANALYSIS OF THE PAPERS OF THE CONCLAVE CLEARLY SHOWS THAT THEY WANT A VERY COMPREHENSIVE "DECENTRALIZATION," AFFECTING EVEN ESSENTIAL ATTRIBUTES OF NATL SOVEREIGNTY SUCH AS DEFENSE AND FINANCE.
END COMMENT.

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